

# anarchist fortnightly Freedom

22 Nov. 1980  
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**INSIDE : PRISONS, SQUATTING ... REVIEW : STIRNER**

## The Poodle with the face of Mirabeau

IT WAS TOTALLY unheard of and, in the relatively small minds of the UK's 600 odd MPs, perhaps never imagined. Yet, on Thursday 13 November 1980 the unheard of and unimagined occurred. Black Rod, the Queen's messenger, was barred entry to the Commons by a phalanx of Labour backbenchers, protesting about the Conservative proposals to increase council house rents.

The 'Gang of Three', Labour right-wingers David Owen, Shirley Williams and William Rodgers, were ostensibly beside themselves at such an insult to the authority of the Speaker, to the honour of the Commons and to the pomp and circumstance of Black Rod himself, who was there to prorogue parliament

and lead a procession to the House of Lords.

Yet was their fury not mitigated by a certain malicious pleasure? Certainly Dr. Owen and Mr. Rodgers lost no time in attributing to Michael Foot complete responsibility for the outrage. This marked the opening shot in their battle to save the soul of the Labour Party as they see it by causing mass defection of Labour MPs and voters with them if Foot does not mend his ways.

In their campaign the 'Gang of Three' have behind them the full weight of the daily press, radio and television, which had done their utmost to promote Foot's closest rival Denis Healey. On 11 November, after the result was known, The Times actually lost its temper and described Foot's election by 10 votes over Healey (John Silkin and Peter Shore having been eliminated in the first round) as an act of 'unmitigated folly'. Using an odd mixture of images the editorial went on to refer to Foot's past as 'Mr Jack Jones's poodle' and to his leading the Party 'in a wild charge to the left' - unless, that is, his close colleagues could restrain him. Elsewhere in this august rag, Foot was transformed from wildly charging poodle into 'pre-revolutionary', a 'Mirabeau presaging a political logic from which he would personally recoil'.

The radicalism of Michael Foot has been taken just as seriously at the other end of the political spectrum. Individuals on the 'far left' who had previously cursed both houses, are becoming Labour Party members or thinking seriously of voting for it at least. Those who remember Foot in the vanguard of the CND marches of the late '50s and early '60s are becoming members of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, whose ranks have swelled considerably over the last few weeks. For at least some of these people Foot is indeed a second Mirabeau, who will pit the full force of his romanticism, idealism and

IT'S SO HONOURABLE  
TO BE AN ANARCHIST!  
BUT!  
IT'S MUCH COSIER  
IN THE LABOUR PARTY!





oratory against the ancien regime and Margaret Thatcher's Marie-Antoinette.

For an anarchist, however, who is leader is immaterial: what matters is the fact that the Labour Party is, and will remain - however the voting arrangements may change in the future - fundamentally authoritarian and statist both in structure and in conception. This is simply because no alternative exists for a party of government committed to the pursuit of 'socialism' through use, and extension, of state power, inevitably subject to the conservatism of the unions on which it depends and to the power struggle of ambitious professionals, as well as integrally a part of that elective dictatorship that is euphemistically known as parliamentary democracy.\*

'In the past 10 years' observed the Times of Michael Foot's record since entering the shadow cabinet and then the government, 'the balance of his thought, while maintaining his views, has shifted from the pursuit of the ideal to the achievement of the practicable.' This is but a gentle way of saying that all power corrupts, that Foot has proved no exception to the rule, and that it is the machine that must perforce change the man and not vice versa.

Several concrete examples spring to mind. Where, for instance, was the libertarian when he refused to accept the principle of (non-religious) conscientious objection to union membership. Where was the Tribune when, during his time as Secretary of State for Employment, unemployment passed the one million mark. Where was the anti-militarist when, though not actually a member of the 1964 Wilson government with its pro-Vietnam war policy, he nonetheless sustained it. Where was the eulogist of Hazlitt Godwin and Swift when in 1974 he took government office, under

Wilson, for the first time. And where will the unilateral disarmer be if he grows up to be prime minister while at the same time leader of a party which, to survive, must continue to reconcile the left and right wings.

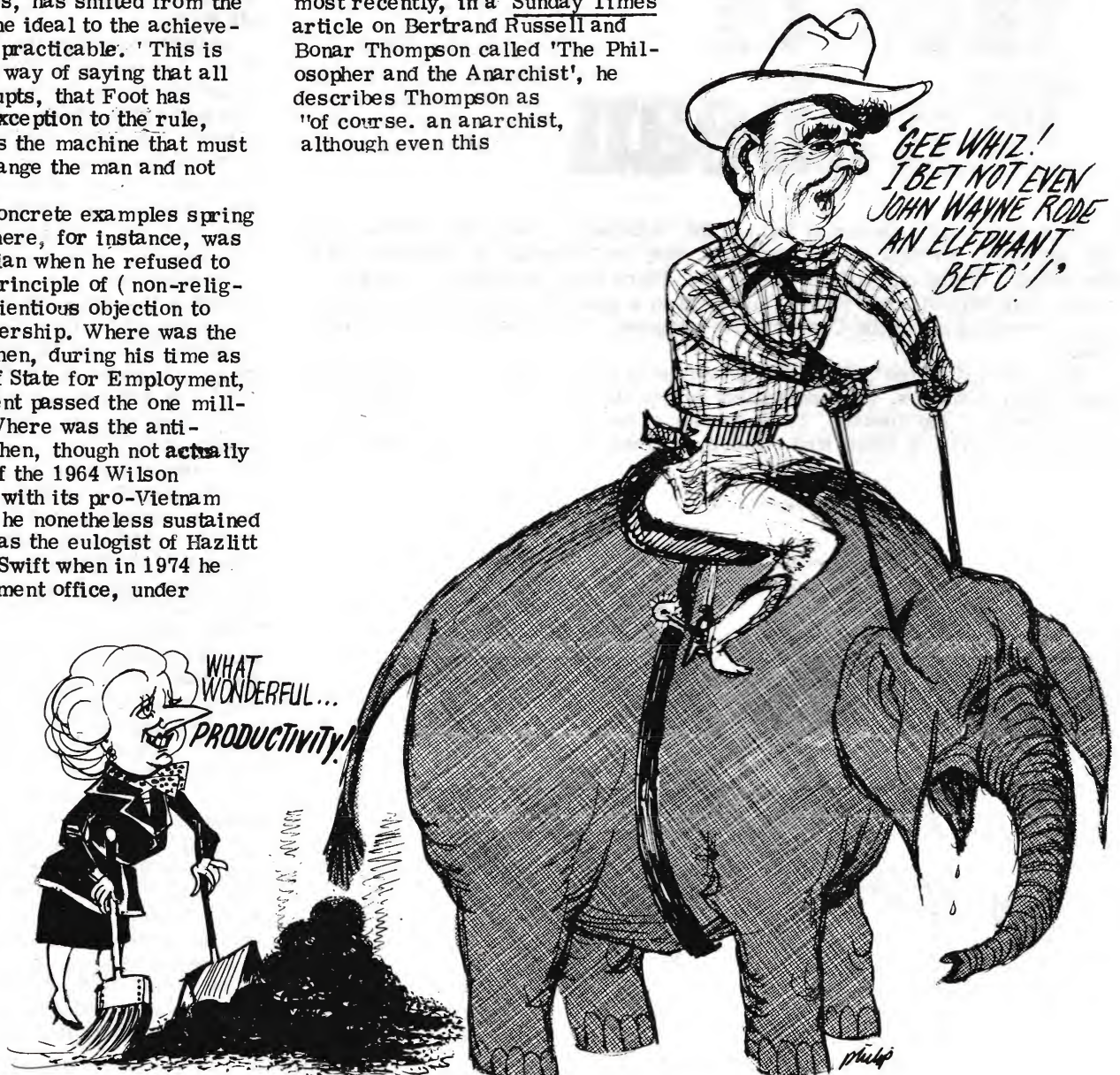
One is brought, however regretfully, to the conclusion that the new leader of the Opposition, that charming poodle with the face of Mirabeau, suffers from a case of profound schizophrenia. This can perhaps be seen most strikingly in Michael Foot's attitude to anarchism, of which I give three examples below. In his introduction to *Gulliver's Travels*, (Penguin, 1967), Foot describes it as sounding 'the trumpet of anarchistic revolt when others who did so were being dispatched to Botany Bay..'. In the same piece he refers to 'William Godwin, the mentor of Shelley, of Hazlitt himself, and of the long, honourable theme of English anarchism..' And most recently, in a Sunday Times article on Bertrand Russell and Bonar Thompson called 'The Philosopher and the Anarchist', he describes Thompson as 'of course, an anarchist, although even this

most honourable title (my emphasis) gives too feeble an indication of his comprehensive iconclasm".

How else can one explain such strange utterances than by schizophrenia or by an extreme form of self-delusion which all politicians who profess ideals must possess in some degree. But whatever the cause, with Foot's election anarchists must work harder than ever to show people that the affliction need not spread any further than the smoking room of the House of Commons.

GAIA

\*For further discussion of these themes, see *The Impossibilities of Social Democracy*, Vernon Richards, Freedom Press, 1978, £1 (26p for postage).





# ANOTHER TURN OF THE SCREW

IF EVER THERE is a time not to get nicked with a brick at your feet, a crowbar in your hand, cannabis in your clothes or an unpaid for dictionary in your inside pocket, then this is it. If you are, you are likely to spend a night with your local guardians of the peace crammed into a single cell with people more unfortunate than yourself who have been excluded from prison by screws in search of a better deal for their dinner hour.

Throughout this dispute the press has bleated on and on about the 'appalling effects' of a failure to settle as soon as possible. The diversion of police resources in accommodating those who should be on remand in prison, the need to transport them to and from court, and the inevitable problem of escapees were all listed as the usual signs of sickness in our society. Hardly a word has been written or spoken about the real victims of the dispute, who are presently spending up to 23 hours a day locked up three to a cell, with little free association, no work, few good meals, little access to lawyers and even less contact with family and friends outside. Some 3000 prisoners unlucky enough to have missed the move to the new Frankland prison remain incarcerated in police stations, described by one official as 'unsanitary, uncivilized and dangerous' - and the cells are even worse. We must now await with gloomy expectation a rise in the current figure of 274 deaths reported to have occurred in police custody, each to be dealt with in a confidential and imaginative police report and each, undoubtedly, ascribing death to some bizarre self-inflicted injury or misadventure.

In his manner of dealing with the current crisis, no-one can deny that Whitelaw's instincts have served him well for a 63 year old conservative landowner. Out went the screws, in came the squaddies. If the bastards continue as they are, few will be capable of resisting the opportunity of joining the elite band of dustmen, water workers, fire-fighters and occupiers of Northern Ireland with a bit of terrorism thrown in for good measure, who will now be trained to guard people as well as kill them.

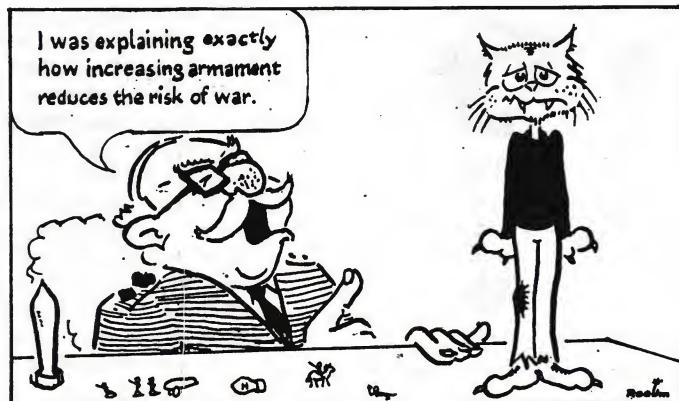
Inevitably our decrepit Minister of the Interior appears unable to improve the position of the inmates with the same spontaneity he uses to contain them. Those who say that the present situation is the product of deep seated resentment within the Prison Officers Association (whose members object to the control exerted over them by civil servants) are wrong. The real malaise lies in the whole system of correction and imprisonment itself, which simply serves to remove human dignity from those already the victims of social injustice and class prejudice. And yet, if anything, our rulers have acted even more oppressively in allowing to become, at between 43000 and 45000, the highest in Europe, and in authorising no effective improvements in accommodation or welfare. In his report of 1966 Mountbatten, the hero of our time whose bungling ineptitude as Viceroy of India exceeded that of any professional politician, was once again allowed to assert himself by making security the central feature in prison development. The report was followed by a decline in the programme providing for open prisons and introduction of an expensive dispersal

system for prisoners deemed a high security risk. The result has been to allow intolerable overcrowding, where stress disorders grow ever more serious and in which an increasingly volatile atmosphere is only defused by extensive use of tranquillisers and other sedatives.

The Imprisonment (Temporary Provisions) Bill empowers Whitelaw to approve places other than prisons for detention of inmates, to authorise the temporary release of prisoners imprisoned or remanded in custody, to release prisoners nearing the end of their sentences, and to authorise the courts to remand people in their absence. As such, although it has to be renewed after one month and will lapse after twelve months unless parliament descides otherwise, the bill has been acclaimed by some as a means of promoting penal reform. In fact, this law shows the ease with which the judiciary can be overridden as the administrators of justice' and is a further sign that our constitution is a lie and a sham. Whitelaw and his cronies pay only lip service to the cries for prison reform for, their chief concern must be systematically and relentlessly to suppress those who show themselves in any way opposed to the status quo. The administration of prisons, like the building themselves, has changed little since the nineteenth century: it remains a business for suppressing the will, not allowing it to develop, and no amount of reform will ever change that. We can be certain that our goal, the abolition of prisons and restoration of individual liberty to all, irrespective of background or conduct, will never be granted during the life of a state which forever demands more power and less accountability.

R. T.

WILPCAT





# Seize Housing!

## KILNER HOUSE

ON NOVEMBER 13th Lord Justice Park granted the GLC repossession of Kilner House. There is a five day stay of execution on the order so Wednesday 19th is the earliest that the bailiffs and police can arrive. We are prepared for all eventualities. On Sunday 16th November at the prestigious GLC site at the Bayonne Road Estate in Fulham where twenty seven houses originally intended for council tenants are up for sale on the open market (some at £50,000 a go) the show house and two other houses were squatted. This was a concerted effort by the Bayonne Road Action Group, London Squatters Union, the SPG (Squatters Patrol Group) and various homeless people. There was support from local Trades Councils, workers on the site and local tenants.

The struggle continues. Seize housing!

### SHERLOCK HOMELESS

ON SATURDAY 15th there was a meeting and rally at Kilner House aimed at getting more support and publicity for the squat and the coming eviction. A BBC camera team were there apparently gathering material for a documentary on the failure of the welfare state.

They filmed some of the proceedings as well as taking pikies of an identical block next to the squat that has every window boarded up and appears to be empty awaiting the same treatment as Kilner House. As liberals go the BBC people seemed to be quite sympathetic.

To start with it looked like hardly anyone was going to turn up, then

people eventually arrived and just before the speeches started a group of seventeen Dutch squatters turned up to see what was going on. By then there were about fifty of us in the courtyard. The speeches were fairly tedious and predictable.

Someone from London Squatters Union told us all about the housing crisis and how Kilner House was a response to it. Then one of the 150 occupants told us why he was squatting and a little about how the squat was going.

Next was a Labour Party hack from the local Fulham Fightback Against the Cuts who told us that the squat had their complete support, and then a bureaucrat from some trade union told us how building workers fully supported the squat. Contributions were then invited from the assembled hordes whereupon a WRP member got up and gave their standard speech 'world-wide crisis... only party of the working class... support you completely... drone drone drone...'

An anonymous squatter then warned people not to trust the Labour Party or the Trade Unions or the short-life housing co-ops because he had been evicted by a Labour council and had a potential squat smashed up by a co-op. He was well received when he told people to trust only themselves and their own actions and not any revolutionary party.

Then after the hat was passed round to help keep the campaign going the meeting sort of drifted off into informality.

Since the Kilner House squat started, the people there have been keeping video recordings of all the important events as well as going out to local tenants of similar blocks and interviewing them.

We were invited to see these videos and we crowded into one of the very nice little flats to watch.

The meetings were interesting for their lack of bureaucratic procedure and their informality. Problems were discussed openly and easily and were usually sorted out. There also seemed to be a very strong feeling of community. There were people who had been referred to the squat because they were in desperate need who were normally very straight and would never have dreamed of squatting and it was very cheering to see these people on

the video responding so warmly and openly to the new community they were in. Many of the barriers of the isolation of living in council flats were clearly disappearing as the people became part of the community.

The response of the local residents when they were interviewed was also surprisingly friendly. Most of the older people thought it was criminal to put council properties on the open market and their feeling towards the squat was summed up by one man who said 'The GLC deserve it'. The feeling seemed to be different amongst the younger people though, who had no real opinion on the squat but thought it was OK to put council flats on the market.

The squatters have also put out a small newspaper 'Kilner News' from which the accompanying graphics are taken.

As we go to press the barricades are going up at Kilner House and by the time you read this it will probably all be over. But the feeling at Kilner House even amongst those who had never squatted before, seems to be that this is only the beginning.

DS

## ISLINGTON

ISLINGTON Council has introduced a £3 per week levy on all short life property in the borough.

Licencees are forced to pay two rents. One to the groups which actually manage and repair the property, and one to the council for nothing.

There will be a mass picket of Islington Councillors at the Town Hall on December 4th from 6pm when the so-called Labour Council will be deciding on action to take against the licencees (probably eviction) if they continue to refuse to pay the levy.

PAUL GEORGE.





# Fascism, Fighting & Freedom

THE LEFT is off again. A planned 'counter-demonstration' against the British Movement in London next weekend is an example of recent attempts to recreate enthusiasm for the Anti Nazi League and reverse the flagging interest in the myriad political parties of the Left whose membership is generally declining. In something resembling a 'kick a fascist for Christmas' campaign, the heroes of the revolution have got over the trauma of Maggie's ascent to the throne with the realisation of their impotence which was beautifully illustrated in the Day of Action on May 14th and the Right to Work march last month. As a result they have turned their attention back to a clearly identifiable and more easily accessible enemy, Fascism, in the form of the NF and BM. Here you really can see results; plenty of blood, plenty of shouting and plenty of running about. The trouble is, if they really meant to smash fascism by smashing heads they'd have to begin with that sacred cow, the working class in general, the biggest bunch of reactionaries ever seen. But who's going to crack worker's skulls (and by the logic of the Left become fascists themselves.)

What worries me is that many anarchists and genuinely passionate individuals will get caught up in the approach of the Left (most forcefully represented by the SWP) as they did several years ago, by the illusion of 'significance' and endless promises of decisive action. The reality of the situation is that any resurrection of the moribund ANL will only provide the opportunity for those 'activists' living off 'what I did at Lewisham' stories to regain their street credibility and refresh the illusion of themselves as revolutionaries, in a purely peripheral action which poses no threat to the actual oppressors, who are already in power.

It is naive liberalism to argue that the NF is a political power base. It is merely a diversion from real government attacks on living standards; the incorporation of official Trade Unions into the state apparatus of control in order to recuperate opposition; the development of the technological efficiency of the repressive apparatus of the police and army to deal with any social unrest; and the bloody use of any

level of violence to maintain power as we can see in Northern Ireland.

The NF may want to suppress all opposition themselves, but neither Maggie nor any government is likely to hand over power like good little democrats. If the NF stood absolutely any chance of winning the election game, those already in power would just change the rules or as a last resort ban them.

Today it is the institutions of 'democracy' that consolidate a central and fundamental shift in power relationships which Fascism used to. In Germany for example, it was fascism which converted laissez-faire capitalism into modern bureaucratic state capitalism. In fact every aspect of fascism which could usefully be incorporated into the modern state has already. A state with the mass media and Trade Unions in its pocket and a highly trained and well equipped police and army at its disposal does not require help from ex-servicemen, skinheads and paranoiacs.

One argument used heavily by many leftists comes, significantly, out of the mouth of Hitler himself. It claims that the Nazi party could have been stopped if nipped in the bud with utmost ruthlessness. But they forget that social, economic and political conditions provide the opportunity for the growth of fascism of which the NF and Adolf Hitler are the result. Had Hitler been crushed some other party would have taken advantage of the situation. Fuhrers are two a penny. It is then, the social, economic and political systems which determine these conditions which we must destroy, not your unemployed skinhead.

One thing is undeniable; fascists still beat up blacks and minority groups and this is important. It is a perverted bourgeois mentality that is more indignant at the 'illegal' violence of the NF and BM than the infinitely greater 'legal' violence of the state. Having said this, we must nevertheless prevent thugs beating people up, but not by engaging in set-piece ritualistic confrontations in which busloads of 'activists' descend on an area for a couple of hours street fighting. This is no substitute for the organisation (permanent or temporary) of local defence. Leav-

ing it, as the authoritarian left advocate, to professional anti-fascist street fighters is an idea that is elitist and encourages a passivity in those who are most directly affected. It is necessary for the local people - and it is these locals who must fight the battles - to break out from this passivity, to explode the myth of leadership on which all government depends, for it is this very obedience that allows fascists and other authoritarians of whatever political colour to take control. The cathartic effects of an autonomous attack on the oppressors is the essence of liberation as the Bristol rioters could probably tell you.

Even for ourselves as anarchists the vanguardism of the Anti Nazi League organisations and their creation of an elite of streetfighters is a real danger, because you can bet that these thugs could equally well be used against us as against the NF or BM, and probably will one day.

The liberals and fellow-travellers would like to ban the marches and thus escape the confrontations. But to set up the legislative machinery that could in other circumstances be used against liberals, anarchists and socialists as well is just bloody suicide.

It is obvious that we must protect the right of the NF and other fascists to freedom of speech against both the state and the organisations of the left. However much we detest the filth which they may spout this is in our own self-defence. The state and possibly the authoritarian left are constantly attacking the chances we have to be heard as revolutionaries and bells we have precious little opportunity as it is!

The NF and BM exploit a vacuum in political and social life, they have not invented it. The left, reacting hysterically, avoid the real problems of racial prejudice and brutal authoritarianism in ordinary working people. The irrational fears are not eradicated by kicks in the teeth but by tackling the causes, not merely the material conditions of housing, working conditions, unemployment and inadequate social facilities but



## FASCISM, FIGHTING &amp; FREEDOM (cont. from p.5)

also the fundamental perversion of relationships between people under capital, generations of authoritarian enchainment and innumerable political lies.

The end of fascism can only be brought about as one aspect of the transformation of society in which

authoritarians and elitists, with their greed for political and personal power and with the ugly impersonality of their ideologies (both left and right) will be dethroned.

When these liars have gone so will fascists.

D.E.

## Music for the Marshes

This article has been cut due to lack of space

What is special about the Marshes Walthamstow Marshes are the only true marshes remaining in the Lea Valley. It was always Common Land, used for grazing in the winter and haymaking in the summer, by a system of Lammas Rights. When the rights fell into disuse, the Walthamstow Corporation Act of 1934 made the land Public Open Space.

Walthamstow Marshes has been described as the 'Fen in the City'. To quote from a leaflet:

The Marshes provide a place of relaxation in a highly built up area. They are an oasis of wilderness where the pressures of urban life cannot impinge ...

And all this 10 minutes walk from the snarling traffic of Lower Clapton Road.

### THE THREAT TO THE MARSHES

The Marshes are owned by the Lea Valley Regional Park Authority. Their plan is to extract gravel from the Marshes over a 5 year period, using part of the resulting lake for water sports and filling in the rest to provide yet more playing fields. The GLC, after a very strong and successful campaign, turned down the application but the LVRPA decided to appeal to the Department of Environment and a planning enquiry is inevitable.

### OBJECTIONS TO THE SCHEME

There are 5 main points. The destruction of a unique local amenity true country-side in a built-up area where many households even lack gardens is the main point. Other points are the destruction of a unique landscape - loss of an educational facility of potential and actual value to East Enders. 'Here we have a very ancient meadow that has somehow survived right in the heart of the city.'

### THE CAMPAIGN

The campaign consists of local people on both sides of the Lea, who believe that the Marshes are unique and must be saved. They have been campaigning for a year now and need your help. Campaign secretary, Jane Nash, 93 Mayola Road, London, E.5. tel: 01-986 1765.

### BENEFIT CONCERTS

Among the local people who support the campaign are some extremely gifted musicians. They have very generously given their time on several occasions in the past year and through their efforts the campaign has benefited enormously.

The most recent concert took place in the upstairs room of the Hackney Trades Hall in Dalston Lane (which was opened up by no less a 'libertarian' than Michael Foot, P.C.M.P. on Nov 26 1977 according to a plaque on the wall - remember the name?) and it was marvellous music, excellently performed and happily listened to by an audience that included babes in arms and octogenarians.

The programme given by John Nash guitarist, Stuart Deeks, violin and Bob Winquist, viola included pieces by Joseph Haydn, J.S. Bach, Jacques Ibert, Edward Elgar and Joseph Kuffner. I was particularly moved by their rendering of Bela Bartok's Roumanian Folk Dances, pieces which Bartok recorded in the field among the Szekelys, the little known, very poor and to the present day dreadfully persecuted people of Transylvania, yet without whom there would be no 'modern' music in the world today. John Nash's and Stuart Deek's transcription for violin and guitar was poignant and the 'complaint' of the violin on the high register was an uncanny reminder of persecuted humanity. A great occasion. The campaign has also published a book on the fauna and flora of Walthamstow Marshes. Very informative. Available from the above address. (About £1 +pp.)

John Rety

## Correction

DUE TO the gross inefficiency, negligence and incompetence of Roger, Steve and David who shall remain nameless there is an error on page 12 of this weeks review. The article headed 'The Economics of Nuclear Power' should be headed 'The Economics of Nuclear War.'

## Suppressed News Corner



READERS of the Hungarian daily newspaper 'Magyar Nemzet' are yet to be told of the existence of the Polish Workers Movement, 'Solidarity'. (Source: 'Magyar Nemzet'.)

ARDENT communists should also know that the Hungarian Communist Party, after the electoral defeat of 1945, opened its doors to ex-Nazi activists in order to increase its membership. (Source: Schopflin ex-Hungarian ambassador to Sweden, now retired in Norfolk, who was part of the decision-making clique that has since 'regretted' it.)

BEST thing is to start the quote: Daily Telegraph, Friday November 14, 1980. 'Dennis Morris' remembers the 'Blitz': (after a description of war-time experience in Coventry following the devastation) he writes:

'One wonders in nuclear terms how best to uphold the morale and well-being of what will be a huge and very scattered fringe population of little-harmed but desperate people deprived of services deemed essential. How can Government keep in touch with the governed, an essential if law and order are to prevail over anarchists or vandals presented with the easy fruits of destruction.'

'Without doubt, on N. Day people's main radios will be mute through failure of the electricity supply, whilst battery sets will have a relatively limited life...etc.'

'Dennis Morris' then describes an information network that ought to be set up 'located below ground with periscope-type loudspeakers'. Then from a hindsight from 40 years ago he forecasts:

'After a nuclear attack, public morale - the ultimate factor in the survival of a democracy under stress - will not be influenced by isolated acts of leadership, by Royal example of compassion, but by careful, extensive and intelligent Government planning. One can only hope that this is quietly being done.'

Are we not entitled to know? And anybody know what the blurted-out N. Day stands for?

PE PE

(Please send your observations to FREEDOM for this occasional column)



# LET'S RIOT!

The recent CND rally raised some interesting points. The demo met no police aggression as long as it stayed on the proscribed route- (we're trying to avoid our proscribed medicine-annihilation) but total repression the instant marchers tried any deviation.

The authorities well understand the political passivity and will to obey implied by the act of sticking only and completely to a legalised route. They will apply every effort to stop any deviation as a mob choosing its own route is a threat to the established order and a mob under police control is not. Under the logic of this system the police will shoot us to protect nuclear institutions; if we are to save life on this planet we will have to defeat the police on the streets while not getting massacred.

The CND rally started smoothly enough with 60000 gathering in Hyde Park and then moving down the police tube to Trafalgar. Creation Rebel played a short set hampered by poor stage management. The CND speakers spoke for several hours during which the attempt at a separate demo was staged.

A band mounted on a truck pulled into Whitehall 100 yards down from TS and a separate group of people from TS tried to join them and go on to Westminster. The police reaction was to seal off Whitehall with a double cordon and 70 nervous policehorses. People milled threateningly; cries of 'Smash the fascists' and 'Police state' rent the air for a few minutes but the few lacked the righteous fury of the average Paris or Amsterdam demo so battle was postponed. One day....

Back at the foot of Nelson's Thing the police were still holding the press area but were brushed aside by Killing Joke's fans when they went on to play.

This was the only victory for the people on the day. The Pop Group then played a set which was amputated when the pigs enforced DOE bylaws at 5 pm and turned off the PA. The crowds then dispersed rather than riot.

Future demos will have to reproduce the spontaneous and violent fury that is a regular feature of European demos and was raised to an art by Paris 68. To shy away from this conflict is to accept Armageddon. If we are to change the direction of this society.... Only 45 demonstrating days till Xmas...

Richard



## INDIANS & BELGIANS

May I draw your attention to the fact that the 4 Russell Tribunal takes place in The Netherlands at the end of next month. It takes place on the subject of the rights of the (American) Indians in the Ameri America's (North and South). It takes place from the 24th - 30th of November 1980 at de Doelen, Schouwburgplein 50, Rotterdam. It is organized by the Foundation Workgroup Indian Project and their address is Bloemgracht 90, 1015TM Amsterdam, P. O. Box 51322 1007EH Amsterdam.

I, we, know that some aspects of American Indian life and expression turn some anarchist comrades off in particular WASP-anarchists, but that should not stop us having a sympathetic (at least) look for their fight for survival. And I believe that if more of our comrades here in Europe and across the Atlantic had a more serious look and listen at what traditional minded Indians especially in the USA say and write and do they would realise that there is much more than expected. I personally think that American Indians can help us to analyse capitalist western society better than anybody else.

This propaganda letter is intended to spread the knowledge about the 4 Russell Tribunal on the Rights of the Indians among our anarchist comrades so that they spread it further. But in case some comrades need an excuse not to get interested, here is one. Ms. Jo Richardson MP will be sitting on the tribunal... And maybe another excuse: there has been an article in the Europa section of the Times on 7 October by a Jaqueline Grapin (Le Monde) on the (North) American Indians. She does not mention the Tribunal but she believes that the survival of the human race is at

stake! If the Indians don't survive we will neither....

Love and Anarchy,  
RICHARD.

P.S.

May I also ask for solidarity with five Belgian comrades which at present are waiting for trial in Belgium. They had been caught about four months ago damaging a ship carrying nuclear waste. They did some damage but unfortunately not enough to stop the ship. But in the process of being arrested they got beaten up and the largely right wing press in Belgium called them terrorists....

Our Belgian comrades are trying now to build up some international solidarity and I'm determined to help them with it as much as I can. See for example October 80 News from Nowhere. May be you can get some comrades joining me at a picket on the next few Saturdays from 9.30 - 12.45 at the ticket office of Sabena the Belgian airline in Piccadilly. I will write some placards and print leaflets.

## FUNDS

Donations recieved October 9th-  
November 12th Incl.

### DEFECIT FUND

J.D. £4.00; Leeds. S.B. £3.00; Wolverhampton J.L. £1.50; J.K.W. £0.50p; J.M. London £0.50p; London SE3 £7.18; Cork K.D. 50p London H.D. £2.00; Hull N.V. £3.00; Oslo, Norway. R.B.M. £2.00 London I.J. £6.50; Fife J.H. £1.50; London A.L.S. £1.50; Hull P.M. £1.00; D.B. £5.50; St. Andrews I.C.S. £1.50; St. Cloud, Minn. USA M.G.A. £17.00; Falsworth M.J. £1.36; London SW15 £0.50p; London L.F. £5.00; Glasgow J.H. £0.50p; Southend R.B. £3.30; Los Angeles, USA S.S. £7.60; Sommerville, Mass. USA W.N. £4.50; Wolverhampton J.L. £4.50; J.K.W. £1.00;

**TOTAL = £289.69**

Previously acknowledged = £1366.84

**TOTAL TO DATE = £1456.53**

### PREMISES FUND

Wolverhampton J.L. £8.00; J.D. £4.00; London T.H. O'D. £3.00; London L.S. £20.00; London H.D. £1.00; Oslo, Norway R.B.M. £2.00; London E3 £6.50; London L.S. £6.30; Fife J.H. £1.50; London A.L.S. £1.50; London NW3 £0.60p; Glasgow J.H. £6.75p; Troy, NY USA D.T.W. £42.50; London L.S. £12.50;

**TOTAL = £112.15**

Previously acknowledged = £495.82

**TOTAL TO DATE = £ 607.97**



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A.C.T. 2602.

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linghurst, NSW 2010.  
Disintegrator! PO Box 290,  
Bondi Junction, Sydney.  
Sydney Anarcho-Syndicalists,  
Jura Books Collective,  
417 King Street, Newtown,  
NSW 2042.

Queensland  
Libertarian Socialist Organi-  
sation, PO Box 268, Mount  
Gravatt, Central 4122.  
Self-Management Organisation,  
PO Box 332, North Quay.

South Australia  
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North Adelaide 5006.

Victoria  
La Trobe Libertarian Social-  
ists, c/o SRQ, La Trobe Univer-  
sity, Bundoora, Vic. 3083.  
Monash Anarchist Society, c/o  
Monash University, Clayton,  
3168 Melbourne.  
Libertarian Workers for a Self  
Managed Society, PO Box 20,  
Parkville 3052.

Chummy Fleming Bookshop, 26 Reg-  
ent Arcade, 210 Toorak Road, South  
Yarra (Libertarian Workers shop).

Western Australia  
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Mount Hawthorn 6016.  
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### U. S. A.

Arizona  
Malicious Hooligans (anti-  
nuclear), 1110 W 2nd Street,  
Tempe, AZ 85281.

### California

Autonomia, PO Box 1751 San  
Francisco, CA 94101.  
Libertarian Anarchist Coffee-  
house, meets last Sunday each  
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Mission St., San Francisco.

### Minnesota

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1070 Wien.

### FRANCE

Federation anarchiste franç-  
aise, 3 rue Ternaux, 75011  
Paris. (Groups throughout  
France).

Union Anarchiste, 9 rue de  
l'Ange, 63000 Clermont Ferrand.

### ITALY

Autogestione, Casella Postale  
17127, 1-20100 Milano.

Grupp Hem Day, Giovanni Trapani,  
CP6130, Roma-Prati.

### The Netherlands

De Vrije Socialist,  
Postbus 411, Utrecht.

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Aarhus: Regnbuen Anarkist Bog-  
cafe, Mejlsgade 48,  
8000 Aarhus.

Copenhagen: Anarkist Syndical-  
ist Bogcafe, Studiestræde 18,  
1455 Copenhagen.

Rainbow Anarchists of the Free  
City of Christiana, c/o Allan  
Anarchos, Tinghuset, Fristaden  
Christiana, 1407 Copenhagen.

### Norway

ANORG, Høxtvedtv. 31B,  
1431 As. (Publish 'Polke-  
bladt' 4 times a year.)

### Sweden

Syndikalist Forum, Tenstiernas  
Gata 51, 11631 Stockholm.

Syndikalistiskt Forum (anarcho-  
synd. Bookhop), Husagatans 5,  
41302 Gothenburg (tel. 031-  
132504).

### FINLAND

Anarkistiryhmä, c/o Terttu  
Pesonen, Neljas Linja 14 D 83,  
00530 Helsinki 53.

## Events

Direct Action Movement debate on  
unemployment at the Two Ships  
Hotel, Hope Street, Rochdale at 8pm  
Thursday November 27th. Speaker  
Jim Petty TGWU.

Anarchist Centre: Meeting to discuss  
premises on 11th December at 7.30  
at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square  
near Holborn tube.

Tayside Anarchists public forum:  
Political Aspects of Nuclear Power  
7pm Thursday 4th December, Well-  
gate conference room, Dundee.

March and Rally for Peace: an all  
Yorkshire march will take place on  
6th December assembling at 11am  
on Woodhouse Moor. Speakers  
include Bruce Kent and Melvyn Bragg.  
Co-ordinated by Leeds Action for  
Peace.

Conference: Anarchism, Society and  
Education - sponsored by Keele An-  
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## The Anarchism of **MAX STIRNER**

SINCE Max Stirner's The Ego and His Own was published in 1844, its author has been the subject of controversy. He has been called, among other things, a precursor of fascism, a pioneer of syndicalism, an egoistic nihilist, an existentialist "before the letter". More than anything else, however, Max Stirner has been connected with anarchism.

Of course, it has been maintained by some that Stirner cannot be classified as an anarchist. R.W. K. Paterson, for example, in his full-length critique, The Nihilistic Egoist: Max Stirner, argues that Stirner's philosophy is incompatible with anarchism. Paterson identifies anarchism with the moral ideals of certain evangelical socialists who want a world of "universal love and brotherly cooperation", and thus has to rule Stirner out of the anarchist court. If one accepts Paterson's definition, then Stirner was certainly not an anarchist. But if one does not see anarchism as a form of egalitarian and democratic communism, then his objection does not hold. Indeed, its probable source was indicated by the late Enzo Martucci when he wrote in his In Defence of Stirner:

The question between anarchists and archists has been badly stated from the start. We are not concerned with whether anarchy or archy can cement the best social relations, or bring about the most complete understanding and harmony between individuals. We try, instead, to discover which is the most useful for the realisation of the individual.

Although Stirner did not call himself an anarchist, The Ego and His Own is the most trenchant case for the individual against authority that has ever been written.

Stirner proclaims his cause to be himself, the unique one, conscious of his egotism, and scorning the State, God, Humanity, Society -- and all the other abstract "spooks" in which the individual is supposed to believe.

"Away, then," he writes, "with every concern that is not altogether my concern!"

"Whats good, what's bad? Why, I myself am my concern, and I am neither good nor bad. Neither has meaning for me.. The divine is God's concern the human's, man. My concern is neither the divine, nor the human; not the good, true, just, free, etc. but solely what is mine and it is not a general one, but it is unique, as I am unique... Nothing is more to me than myself."

To make myself my own cause is to become a self-owning individual and so enter into perpetual conflict with everything outside of me for which my allegiance is claimed and my obedience demanded. Certainly there are and are always likely to be forces -- both natural and institutional -- that are more powerful than I am. But they have no authority in my eyes, and if I am not strong enough to overthrow them, I will evade them in any way that I can.

The state is one of my enemies, for its purpose is at all times and in every place to subordinate my interests to its interests, to extinguish my particularity with the generality of its laws.

Every state is a despotism, be the despot one or many, or (as one is likely to imagine about a republic) if all be lords, -- i.e. despotise over one another. For this is the case where the law given at any time, the expressed volition of (it may be) a popular assembly, is thenceforth to be law for the individual, to which obedience is due from him, or towards which he has the duty of obedience. If one were even to conceive the case that every individual in the people had expressed the same will, and hereby a complete "collective will" had come into being, the matter would still remain the same. Would I not be bound today and henceforth to my will of yesterday? My will in this case would be frozen. Wretched stability! My creature -- to wit a particular expression of will -- would have become my



Pencil sketch of Max Stirner  
Drawn after his death from memory by Engels



commander. But I in my will, I the creator, should be hindered in my flow and my dissolution; because I was a fool yesterday I must remain such my life long. So in the state life I am at best -- I might just as well say at worst -- a bondsman of myself. Because I was a willer yesterday I am today without will; yesterday voluntary, today involuntary.

How change it? Only by recognising no duty -- i.e. not binding myself nor letting myself be bound. If I have no duty then I know no law either.

Stirner, however, has no time for those who rebel against the domination of the state in order to replace it with the domination of "society". Society is not something created by me in collaboration with you for the attainment of a specific end; it is not an association of egoists. It is something into which I am born without choice and from which I must free myself if I am to become fully my own. This cannot be the case if the horizontal authority of "society" is substituted for the vertical authority of the state.

Against the coercions of state and society, Stirner advocates the formation of associations of egoists when cooperation between individuals is expedient. These associations are temporary and voluntary. They have nothing "sacred" about them and exist purely to serve the interests of those who compose them. When I consider an association is of no more use to me I will abandon it without ceremony, since at no time do I consider myself under any obligation to it. Association is thus the opposite of society.

Stirner, therefore, rejects the communist ideal of making society the owner and provider of the means of life:

Communism, by the abolition of all personal property, only presses me back still more into dependence upon another -- viz on the generality or collectivity; and loudly as it always attacks the "state" what it intends is itself again, a state -- a status a condition hindering my free movement, a sovereign power over me. Communism rightly revolts against the pressure I experience from individual proprietors; but still more horrible is the might that it puts in the hands of the collectivity.

For Stirner, property is necessary for his well-being, but it is not to be found in the legalised property system of capitalism, nor in the collectivised property system of the communist. "Property" is what I have the power to appropriate and make my own, irrespective of the "law" or the "community". No scruples about private property as a "total concept" will stop me from theft if this is the only way I can survive. Nor will I be halted by the moral imperatives of the community if I desire to have property of my own and I have the might to get it.

Stirner regards morality as one of the forms of domination over the individual. Moral domination is even more binding than the external constraints of the state and society as it is expressed in the internalised authority called "conscience", a mode of self-intimidation often favoured by the religious (Stirner reminds us that the word "religious" comes from a Latin word which means "to bind"). This is the most difficult form of authority to shake off, for, while I can unscrupulously rebel against the external impositions of the law or social custom, to rebel against conscience seems like rebelling against myself. None the less, the Stirnerian egoist dissolves this spook along with the others, and becomes an amoralist, living "beyond good and evil" even when prudence indicates an outward show of conformity. "I am neither good nor bad. Neither has meaning for me."

The late Herbert Read once wrote of *The Ego and His Own* that it stuck in his gizzard. He could neither digest Stirner's philosophy nor get rid of it. Stirner has presented this problem to many of his interpreters, particularly those who sought to solve it by sweetening his views and incorporating them into doctrines he would have spurned with a few sarcastic

words. Daniel Guerin, for instance, tried to do this in his book *Anarchism*, but he had to conclude mournfully that 'Stirner's synthesis of the individual and society remained halting and incomplete. In the thought of this rebel the social and the anti-social clash and are not always resolved. The social anarchists were to reproach him for this, quite rightly.'

The reproaches of 'social anarchists', like those of Guerin, are a product of wishful thinking, if not outright ignorance. Stirner's anarchism is thoroughly individualist and, far from wanting to reconcile the individual with society, was aimed at dissolving society into its component individualities. To try to make of him yet another social synthesiser is completely to misunderstand him. As John Carroll has remarked, 'Stirner's uncompromising advocacy of self-realisation sets him far apart from other anarchist philosophers, especially Proudhon and Kropotkin. He would have regarded their scrupulous plans and halcyon dreams as abstract and religious in the extreme, not far removed in spirit from the millenarian vision of William Morris's *News from Nowhere*. Stirner's own prolonged introspection gave him a psychological perceptivity which was too down-to-earth to permit Orphic musings -- it is this 'realism' that makes his brand of anarchism the one most congruent to today's situation.'

Stirner as a critic of authority and an advocate of the "anarchy of individuals" has yet to be surpassed. He signposted a way of rebellion and of affirmative individualism that depends on neither the changing but superficial fortunes of the political scene, nor the fickle servilities of the acephalous mob. His greatest achievement was to create *The Ego and His Own* and so provide a perpetual source of intellectual ammunition for those unique ones who succeeded him. In the words of his biographer, John-Henry Mackay:

"He did what he has done for himself, because it was a pleasure to him.

"He demanded no thanks, and we owe him nothing.

"He has only reminded us of our indebtedness to ourselves!"

S. E. PARKER

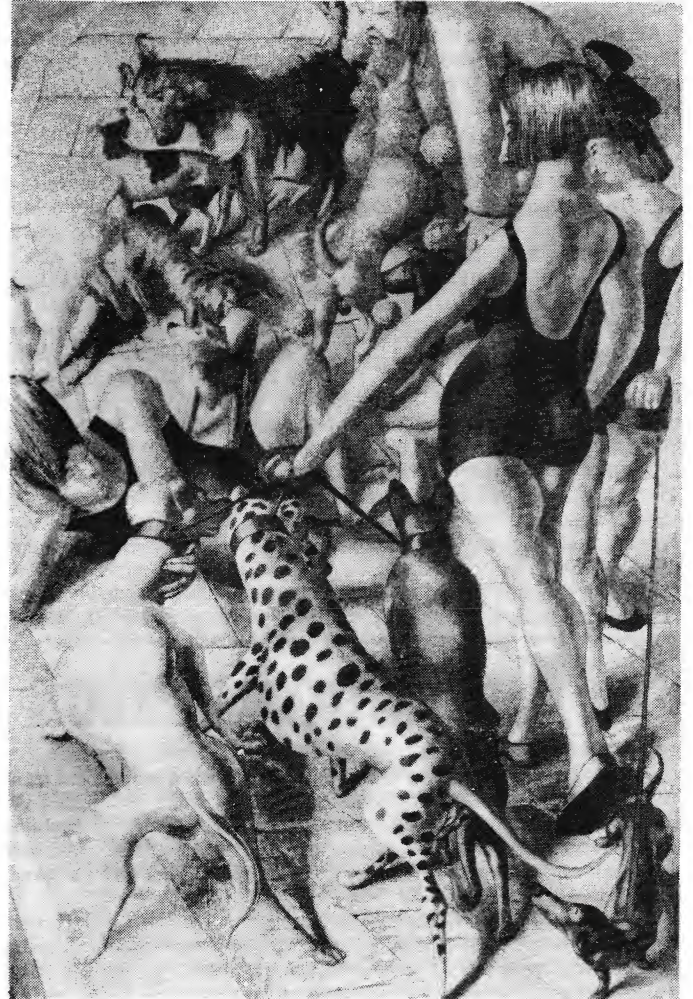


"IS THAT THE WHITE HOUSE, IS THAT YOU, RONNIE, MAGGIE CALLING, I'VE JUST HAD A MARVELLOUS IDEA, LETS ORGANISE THE WESTERN WORLD TO BOYCOTT THE THIRD WORLD WAR."



# FORWARD TO THE LOO

I HAVE written that history repeats itself first as tragedy and then as farce and if my claim to have compounded this platitude is false then sue me. On the 20th April 1920 the Cologne Dadaists decided to hold their first 'The First Dada Event'. It was organized by Max Ernst and Baargeld and while it was exciting it is recorded that even the work that was to be given away free failed to find buyers. There was the inevitable cries of obscenity and communism over the use, one assumes, of the revamped marxist slogan Dilettanten erhebt euch! Dilettantes arise! and the fact that a young girl wearing her first communion dress stood within the exhibition and recited poems of Jacob van Hoddiss. All in all it was happytime with imitation blood and Max's historical axe chained firmly to a tree trunk for the visiting firemen to hack away to show their simulated rage. By IT and OZ standards of 1950 and 1960 it was watered down lager. Baargeld was one of the founders of the Rhineland Communist Party and in 1919 the left of left paper Der Ventilator that he directed and which contained poems and articles by Max Ernst had a run of 20,000 copies therefore anything that they became involved with had by their nature to be of interest. Yet one feels that in politics and in art it was the vicarious pleasures of nihilism that was the key to their actions. Having cocked their snoot at the local Establishment the inevitable took place and Max Ernst's uncle acting in his other hat as the public prosecutor issued a warrant for the police to close the gallery but as in all good Reagan style B movies the white hats won when it was found that the only piece of good clean public filth on display was Durer's etching of Adam and Eve. What made the 1920 Dadaist exhibition of note was that to enter the exhibition that was held in a room behind a cafe one had to go through a public lavatory and into history. The National Portrait Gallery is an austere building wherein one nods to the attendant, walks up the stone steps, is handed ones press hand out and visually records that the current exhibition is on one's left and the wine table red or white, is on the right. Every one is very polite and there is no horseplay with the mad Pole or the bearded Dutchman and the press office women have the shy trembling charm of Pre-Raphaelite paintings womanpersonwise. It is this simple fact that makes the heart pound and the blood surge when on entering the National Portrait Gallery for the 'The Gentle Eye' exhibition of photographs by Jane Brown of the The Observer newspaper one was



'The Bathing Pool Dogs' by Stanley Spencer



Jane Brown

S. J. Perelman,  
London, 1978

directed down to the public lavatory. One gives a shy smile and whispers 'later' and asks to be directed to the exhibition and three polite attendances point down to the public lavatory and in that situation one can only take history by the throat and with one hand on one's zip and the other holding the press card descends into the unknown and there was the exhibition and there at their small table were two shy presspersons, to my right was the exhibition, to my left was the red and white and within touching distance was the public loo. All else can

only be an anti-climax in this re-run of history 1920/1980. Honesty and good faith demand that I speak of Jane Brown's photographs and all that one can say is that they are pleasant studies of a number of minor celebrities of our age who did little harm to the world in general and write their names small on the arse of history and we who will never attain to being Poet Laureate, Archbishop, Sir or Cardinal sneer only because I am sick with jealousy but I will never hold that photography is an art form so that pretty Jane I wish you well. It would seem that we are surrounded by the desire of the Observer newspaper to educate the Island Race artwise for they are responsible for the Stanley Spencer exhibition within the Royal Academy. Spencer was a brilliant draftsman and he could fill the great wall spaces so that the paintings merge into a great unified whole but having mapped out his great fresco I feel that he became lazy and that the brush work became of little import for the excitement was in the initial layout. In his small self portraits he is a magnificent colourist. In his landscape magnificent. In his great paintings of the Clyde ship workers there are brilliant areas of red hot welded metal but in the painting of cloth, walls and people he became slipshod. The Academy can take pride in this exhibition and in the great catalogue which one must assume is a definitive work of the man as artist. Is Spencer a great painter and I would say no. His



fame is purely parochial in relation to these islands and I would place him alongside men such as Diego Riviera. One is impressed by the sheer weight of the subject matter. One has an historical association with it and that is what stays in the mind but the longer one stays with these great paintings the more one is conscious of their flaws. I honour a brilliant painter and congratulate the Royal Academy of winning the jack pot for at long last giving the visitor their entrance fees worth. But one cannot say this of the 'Treasures from Chatsworth'. The Duke and Duchess of Devonshire trod the light fantastic on the press day as the fourth estate searched for the wine and I wish them well for their title has a Rowlandson ring but of the treasures then not for me. I do not dispute that all in all it is probably worth zillions of £££ but to my innocent eye it is like so much of these great heirlooms no more than junk jewellery cast in gold and decorated with whatever pretty baubles that one has. There are drawings by Inigo Jones, van Dyck and Rembrandt and own them and you cannot go wrong etc but one must bow to the Duchess' taste in that she has a number of watercolours by Lucian Freud who is our finest watercolourist. But the 1607 Kniphausen 'Hawk' 14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> inches high reminded me too much of Sam Spade and the Maltese Falcon and I feel that if I won that or the Delft tulip vase at a bingo session I would hand it back for a bottle of whisky rather than be seen walking home with it. Bad taste made acceptable only by venerable age, as they said of my late and unlamented grandfather. But what I do like is the fine catalogue with its civilised introduction by Sir Anthony Blunt. It is nice to know that old Sir Tony made this exhibition before he dropped his clanger. He was naughty but he left lesser types behind. Sir Hugh Casson PRA is one of those happy types who are destined to appear at the end of every speech by those in command. A small and cheerful little man who smiles through one and is the ideal Personnel Officer for some great Corporation on a rising market and why not. Esso Petroleum and the Solomon R Guggenheim Museum have presented the Island Race, within the Royal Academy, with the work of eight artists and they have named it in a moment of mental aberration 'British Art Now'. Diane

Waldman made us a long involved speech that must be fodder for so many a mid American art college but one looks at the work upon the walls, and condemns it out of hand. It cannot be accepted as British Art now for it is no more than the usual slap happy abstracts, tree trunks, plaster boulders and all the other third rate trivia that Bond Street junked ten years ago.

Sir Hugh Casson leaped like an aged superman onto one of the padded seats and made his bow to Diane for her speech and this exhibition and then made his fatal mistake by asking for questions and I asked and repeat that if this insignificant abstract work is 'British Art Now' then why does Sir Hugh, and I am a right crawler for a title Duchess, not give it pride of place among all the representational work that fills his Summer Exhibition and Hugh smiled and answered with a zen answer but he knows I am right.

There is so much rubbish around the Town but one should not complain. Paul Jenkins with lazy slap happy work at Gimpel when he is capable of so much good abstract painting. Old Victor Pasmore padding along along in the upstairs gallery of the Royal Academy with his regional abstractions on display and the pleasure to talk to the old man and to remember his past work with pleasure. The awful rubbish of the late Canadian painter Jack Bush in the Serpentine Gallery and do not let us speak ill of the unknown dead but let us at least have the honesty to condemn bad work badly executed. Yet there is salvation and it is not the rent paying portraits of Thomas Gainsborough that will be around comrades when we are dust but again to the upper air of the Royal Academy for the exhibition of the late Algernon Newton who slipped his mortal coil in an off beat moment in 1968. Introduced by Nicholas Usherwood they are beautiful paintings of a decaying and a dying London. Like the American small town painters they give us a world of early morning or dying light, 20th century Canaletto, their beauty lies in the empty streets and empty hearts and the silence that the gaudy boys of British Art Now will never know.

ARTHUR MOYSE.

## The Economics of Nuclear Power

THERE'S no use opposing nuclear weapons without opposing all war - quite obviously. Therefore it is important to examine some of the causes, and possible results of war. War is an important part of capitalist and authoritarian society, including the state capitalists in China and the USSR; and nuclear war is not as significantly different from conventional war as most people imagine.

In the early days of nuclear weapons and the cold war in the 1950s and 60s the policy in building up nuclear weapons, partly because of the crudity of the weapons technology, was for large scale nuclear destruction and holocaust. America had a policy of Mutual Assured Destruction which was supposed to be so horrible that no-one would possibly dare to start a nuclear war.

This is all changing. Weapons technology has developed to a stage where nuclear war can and possibly will be used as a logical extension of conventional warfare. Nuclear weapons are getting smaller and more accurate; This means that relatively small scale destruction could take place if the countries concerned limited the scale of the war. This is far more likely to happen amongst small countries not part of NATO or the Soviet bloc - especially under pressure from these two.

There are now smaller and more powers with nuclear weapons. At the time of the Cold War and Mutual Assured Destruction nuclear capability was only held by Nato, the Soviet Union, China and France.

On September 22nd 1979 South Africa and Israel set off a nuclear explosion in the south Atlantic. Brazil, Iraq and Pakistan are all known to be close to nuclear capability. Politicians in many other countries are keen to get their grubby mitts on weapons and many of these are now being sold nuclear power - for instance the Philippines.

All of these countries are in unstable areas and a small scale nuclear war could easily flare up somewhere like the Middle East.

Like other sorts of war, nuclear war destroys wealth faster than it can be created. It was previously thought that nuclear

war would be akin to Armageddon and Einstein even said that if there was a nuclear war then World War IV would be fought with bows and arrows.

This is no longer true. If a small scale nuclear war took place then capitalism would make massive profits out of the reconstruction as happened after World War II in Germany and Japan who now have the strongest economies in the world. These capitalists are the very same ones who are manufacturing the weapons. They don't want to see a holocaust any more than we do because they can't make profits out of it. World War III could still conceivably be fought conventionally.

But they can, and do, make profits from manufacturing increasingly obsolescent weapons to destroy wealth and then make more profits out of reconstructing that wealth - always at the expense of the workers.

And now they have a better way of doing it. War also cures unemployment because the unemployed are pressed into the army and the weapons industries. War kills off those who are not kept busy at home. Small scale nuclear war could do the same.

But if all they want to do is to cure unemployment and make profits by taking over someone else's industry intact they have the neutron bomb which kills off the opposition population but leaves its industry intact so that the national industrial reserve army of unemployed and others can be moved in to get the industry busy at making them profits with the minimum possible delay and without all the problems of reconstruction.

So they now can make the choice of how to make their profits from war and at the same time cure such slight embarrassments as mass unemployment and a depressed economy, as well as stirring up a bit of national pride to keep the workers from thinking about capitalism and provide a good excuse for rounding up subversives.

And in the meantime they make their profits by selling their weapons to armies of all sides regardless of their fake national pride.



# Jean Paul Sartre

## 1905 - 1980

### Introduction

JEAN PAUL SARTRE died this year at the age of 74. Essentially for Sartre a person is their life, their work - what they do. Critics and commentators normally attempt to describe, explain and evaluate the characteristics of Sartre's prodigious work in philosophy, psychology, literature and politics, in terms internal to and derived from that work. For example, in terms of the categories of his early, pre-'94 'pure' existentialism, or the later, post-war, so-called Marxist or 'Marxist-existential' concepts of, say, Saint-Genet, the Critique of Dialectical Reason or the abandoned four-volume study of Flaubert.

To me, however, Sartre's life and work can best be comprehended in terms of four closely inter-related categories which may appear alien or foreign when applied to Sartre, but in reality provide the most adequate framework for any critical evaluation of his work. The categories are: Reason, Radicalism, Libertarianism and Anarchism.

### Sartre's Rationalism...

Sartre is, in the first place, a man of Reason, a Rationalist, and this in at least three senses. First, in the sense in which we think of Kant, Voltaire, Humboldt, Mill, Freud or Russell, as members of the secular rationalist Enlightenment tradition, with its dominant insistence that Reason should govern the emotions in the lives of people, and not conversely. If, in Freud's image, people's passions are the power-providing rider, then reason should be the controlling and direction-giving rider. Second, Sartre belongs to a distinctive sub-tradition of the Enlightenment typified above all by Hegel, Einstein and Marx. This sub-tradition places special emphasis on the power of the rational intellect to comprehend or appropriate reality; and, in the case of Marx, to change it. For the distinctive Marxian variant, to which Sartre is closest in spirit, Reason, whilst not by itself sufficient, is always necessary for changing the world.

The third sense in which, throughout all the phases and stages of his diverse work, Sartre is a Rationalist, is the sense in which he remains indebted to the Cartesian Rationalism of French Philosopher and Mathematician, Rene Descartes. As Sartre stated in 1944, '...there's only one of our people (ie. French thinkers) who has any profound effect on my mind, and that's Descartes. I consider myself a descendant of his and appeal to the old Cartesian tradition...'

In a more recent 1969 interview in New Left Review, Sartre accurately described his major work on existentialism, Being and Nothingness, as 'a rationalist philosophy of consciousness':

It was all very well for me to dabble in apparently non-rational processes of the individual, the fact remains that

L'Etre et Le Neant is a monument of rationality. Sartre adds that 'in the end it becomes an irrationalism, because it cannot account rationally for those processes which are 'below' consciousness and which are also rational, but lived as irrational'.

Reading Freud shocked him: I was incapable of understanding him because I as a Frenchman with a good Cartesian tradition behind me, imbued with a certain rationalism, and

I was therefore deeply shocked by the idea of the unconscious.

Despite Sartre's subsequent efforts to do justice to Freud's insights, in what a French psychoanalytic friend has termed his 30 year love/hate relationship with Psychoanalysis, and notwithstanding his efforts in Saint Genet, the Critique and his Flaubert to go beyond Descartes, there remains a profound sense in which he has been unwilling or unable to liberate himself from the conceptual framework, -fettters, if you prefer- of the rational Cartesian individual.

### ...Radicalism...

The second essential characteristic of Sartre and his work is his Radicalism. By this I mean a fierce determination to get to the roots of the problem (of theory or practice) in question. For Sartre, as for Marx, to be radical is to penetrate to the root, and the root for man is man. Sartre's constant concern in every domain of 'pure' and 'socially' applied

reason with which he has been concerned, has been to understand and change the world of human reality, by means of radical intellectual (including imaginative) theory and practice. (I should say 'praxis' for Sartre because, as we'll see, one of his radical theses regarding humans is precisely the nonseparable unity of thought and action.)

Sartre gives clear expression to the point of his radical humanism in the New Left Review interview mentioned earlier. The point is ... 'to provide a philosophical foundation for realism. Which in my opinion is possible today, and which I have tried to do all my life. In other words, how to give man both his autonomy and his reality among real objects, avoiding idealism without lapsing into a mechanistic materialism'.

Sartre's radical intellectual temperament, his desire always to draw the radical (logical) conclusions for practice from his radical diagnosis of any phenomenon, is well exemplified in his theory of human nature in Being and Nothingness. People exist - are always and only situated - in external (natural and social) conditions:

'What men have in common is not a nature, but a meta-physical condition; and by that we mean the combination of constraints which limit them a priori; the necessity to be born, and to die; that of being finite and of dwelling in a world among men. For the rest, they constitute indestructible totalities, whose ideas, moods and acts are secondary and dependent structures, and whose essential character is to be situated, and they differ among themselves as their situations differ.'

(Situations II. p 22.)

In thus emphasizing the external (natural and social) conditions in which we think, experience and act, Sartre neglects (to the point of denying) what men as different as Freud or Chomsky regard as the most important determinant of human nature: the internal or biological conditions of our situation. In short, our biologically given mental and physical capacities. These, for both men, determine the range (scope and limits) of possible forms of expression (in thought and deed) of human nature.



Sartre's denial of biological constraints or internal conditions, and his emphasis on the external conditions of our situation, follows from his radical view that men produce their own natures as a product of their free (undetermined) choices and actions. (Deciding or choosing what to do - choosing silence or deciding to do nothing, for example - is itself a mode of acting, for Sartre.)

In Sartre's words:

"... everyone in the eighteenth century thought that all men had a common essence called human nature. Existentialism, on the contrary, maintains that in man - and in man alone - existence precedes essence. This simply means that man first is, and only subsequently is this or that. In a word, man must create his own essence: it is in throwing himself into the world, suffering there, struggling there, that he gradually defines himself. And the definition always remains open ended: we cannot say what this man is before he dies or what mankind is before it has disappeared... existentialism is nothing but a certain way of envisaging human questions by refusing to grant man an eternally established nature..."

And he concludes:

"All I can say - without wanting to insist too much on the similarities - is that it isn't too far from the conception of man found in Marx. For is it not a fact that Marx would accept this motto of ours for man: make, and in making make yourself, and be nothing but what you have made yourself."

(A More Precise Characterization of Existentialism 1944.)

(It isn't possible to discuss here the relations between the thought of Sartre and Marx at each stage of Sartre's intellectual-political development. To anticipate my final thesis, however, I would argue that Sartre's unsuccessful efforts to be (simultaneously) an orthodox and an original-creative Marxist in his later work, no less than his 'pure' Existentialist works, are essentially forms of expression of his fundamental underlying intellectual and political Anarchism.)

Returning to Sartre's radicalism, I haven't space to discuss the details of the remaining radical features of Sartre's Existentialist theory of human nature: his view of situated men as always free to choose and act; his theory of the mind as essentially conscious, à la Descartes; his account of relations between persons, and specifically between the sexes; or his radical theory of responsibility: we are not only causally and morally responsible for all our acts. Whenever we choose and act, as we continuously must, we choose a whole world, for the whole world, for everyone. By our cowardice or courage, as expressed in our patterns of work and love, culture and consumption, no less than in our more overt political practice, we choose to allow the existence of concentration and extermination camps and neutron bombs, genocide in East Timor and mass starvation in Kampuchea. I can be free only if all are free.

In deliberately using these themes from Sartre's pure Existentialist phase to illustrate his Radicalism, I am not suggesting either that the post-1945 Sartre's philosophical, psychological, literary and political works are less radical; or that Sartre has not (more or less) radically revised his views; still less that I am uncritical of them. It's obviously impossible to attempt such a detailed critical analysis here. It must suffice to say that I would agree with the - only apparently paradoxical - self-assessment offered by Sartre on the occasion of his seventieth birthday. All his errors, personal and political, 'pure' and 'applied', derive from his failure to be as radical as he could-hence should - have been:

"In general, it always comes back to not having gone as far as possible in my radicalism. Naturally in the course of my life I have made lots of mistakes, large and small, for one reason or another. But at the heart of it all, every time I made a mistake it was because I was not radical enough."

## ...Libertarianism...

So far I've discussed Sartre's Rationalism and his Radicalism. Now I want to focus on his Libertarianism. By Sartre's constant, life-long libertarian views on human nature and society, I mean first, his insistence that human thought, experience and behaviour is free - ie, undetermined, by either internal-biological or external-social causes. All men have - hence should be free to exercise - the capacity for free thought and action. Even in his most extreme, almost comical efforts to do the impossible and turn himself into what he thought was a good orthodox Marxist, Sartre never abandoned this libertarian conception of human nature. (I pass over in silence the fact that this libertarian theory of human nature presupposes precisely what Sartre denies or plays down: assumptions concerning the existence and attributes of biologically given mental and physical capacities.)

However, even in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre recognized that the social and natural conditions in which men are situated, more or less severely limit our freedom of action. (The "Marxist" Sartre will attempt to characterize these conditions in terms of class relations and relations of material scarcity.) The essential point is that for Sartre a theory of human freedom must have human liberation not merely as its subject, but as its object or aim: "a theory of freedom (must) explain what the forms of alienation are - to what extent freedom can be manipulated, distorted, turned against itself..." (Self-Portrait at Seventy).

Thus it is that, throughout all his developmental stages, Sartre conceives of human liberation from (men-made) causes of unfreedom as his fundamental concern. The point of understanding the world is to change it. The condition for the freedom, equality and just treatment of each is the freedom, equality and just treatment of all:

"If man is an object, it is for another man's use. And it is these two ideas - ... man is free, man is the being through whom man becomes an object - which define our present status and allow us to understand oppression... Our liberty today is nothing except the free choice to fight in order to become free. And the paradoxical aspect of this formula simply expresses the paradox of our historical condition."

(Reply to Albert Camus.)

## ... Anarchism.

Finally there is Sartre's Anarchism. But surely - you may ask - however else one may choose to describe Sartre's efforts to understand and change the world - Totalitarian, Fascist, Communist, Romantic, Irrationalist, Idealist, Nihilist, Marxist, Existentialist ... are just some of the labels applied to Sartre - he is not an Anarchist. On the contrary, though Sartre's Anarchism has passed through various phases and forms of expression, underlying and uniting all his efforts to criticise and change society has been an unconditional opposition to all forms of centralized or even unequal possession and exercise of power. This is the source of Sartre's opposition to authoritarian State "socialism", and in particular, to Stalinist ideology and practices, no less than to the forms of "bourgeois democracy" and the institutions of capitalist society.

Throughout, Sartre has been an anarchist in the sense specified by Adolph Fischer: "every anarchist is a socialist but not every socialist is necessarily an anarchist." Clearly, Sartre's libertarian socialism is intimately related to his radical egalitarian and democratic views, views which are expressed in his plays no less than (for example) his role as Executive President of the Russell International War Crimes Tribunal on "allied" conduct in Indochina. In Sartre's own words,

"I have never allowed anyone to hold power over me, and



I have always thought that anarchy - which is to say, a society without powers - must be brought about."

(Self-Portrait at Seventy)

True, Sartre has vehemently criticized apolitical "anarchists" who invoke the ideal of Purity 'as an excuse for doing nothing' (recall Hoederer's bitter denunciation in the 1948 play, *Dirty Hands*), perhaps because as a young man his own anarchistic thought and behaviour was initially of this kind (compare the second volume of Simone de Beauvoir's memoirs). The young Sartre feared that socialism might be incompatible with individual freedom and his radical egalitarian and democratic views. In the course of his intellectual and political development, however, he soon convinced himself that socialism - ie, libertarian, not authoritarian - State "socialism" - was rather the condition for individual (hence collective) freedom and equality.

It is this fundamental, life-long Anarchism which underlies and expresses itself in Sartre's work in philosophy, psychology, politics and literature - in his Existentialism no less than his criticisms of Stalinist Marxist ideology and practice, in his support for radical Anti-Psychiatry no less than in his post-May 1968 so-called "ultra-left" politics. Sartre recognised this explicitly himself after the events of Paris, May 1968 when he stated: "If one rereads all my books, one will realize that I have not changed profoundly and that I have always remained an anarchist."

These, then are the four essential attributes or determinants of Sartre's life and work: his Rationalism, his Radicalism, his Libertarianism and his Anarchism. They are also what make him, for me, one of the few great men of our time.

Pat Flanagan.

## BABYLON: more than a film review

FILM reviews rarely, if ever, question the validity of a film in social and political terms. They are merely preoccupied with a synopsis of the plot, a few comments on the script, and an appraisal of the acting. They are, after all, being used to sell, (or not sell), a film to their readers. "Babylon" has tried to force out of these sterile commentators more than just the usual 'critique' and asked them to condone or condemn message. The 'liberal' papers, sensing their credibility threatened, have therefore had nothing but praise, though limiting it as much as possible to the framework of an objective, even aesthetic, review. A brief mention, almost in passing, of its merit as a social documentary, and swiftly onto the next film review, before a conclusion needs to be drawn. After all social comment is not supposed to be their job. (Maybe it should be, for they are the ones who spend hours in the darkness examining the workings of one of society's most potent propaganda weapons.) What we need though is more than a film review.

Many readers will already be familiar with the story line and background to the film as it is currently being heavily publicised. Suffice it to say that it deals with one week in the life of a young, black, West Indian man, in one of London's closest equivalents to a racial ghetto, Brixton. Into that week is condensed almost every facet of life normally 'associated' with young blacks. Reggae music, Rastafarianism, ganga, police brutality, mugging, white racism and fascism, family troubles, confusion, alienation, oppression and a great amount of frustration. By all accounts it is an accurate picture of what it is like to be a young black in Britain.

All this is seen through the eyes of one young black, it is spoken in their dialects (sub-titles are used extensively), and played to their rules. It does not wholly condemn nor exonerate any part of the society it deals with. The police are merciless and brutal, though in their eyes a young black wandering the streets at 5am, must seem like a fair target for 'sus'\*. The white fascists/racists are sparked off by the incessant, and loud, reggae music that disturbs their sleep. The young blacks themselves indulge in petty theft, a mugging (very much disapproved of by the main character), and are often a considerable nuisance. Though one's sympathies are directed overwhelmingly in one direction the fact that what is presented is a social problem, experienced by and affecting all, and not the individual actions of 'good guys', and 'bad guys', is never forgotten.

The film is merely stating that for young blacks in today's Britain, life is hard and unjust and that this frustration and oppression causes people to react in ways that are anti-social. (in any society). Nothing new to be sure, but it was stated on celluloid in a manner it has never been stated in before. It looked and felt real.

Coming back to the job of a reviewer. Some one at Rank\*\*, feels that, to quote, "This film needs you and you need it." This must of course refer to all the radical/alternative papers that were probably also invited along. Can it be that the film

needs the seal of approval from the anarchists and the left, to help restore film companies' credibility after the onslaught of trash that currently engulfs our cinemas, and get us to cough up the exorbitant entrance fees once again? Maybe in "Babylon's" case, yes, for those that will appreciate it will be the liberals and radicals, and, more than anyone else, the young blacks whose life-styles it depicts. (It has been given a totally unwarranted "X" certificate in a political move to try and stop anyone under 18 from seeing it.) So are we being asked to help Rank Distribution sell a film? After all it is not an anarchist film, unless you count as such any film that decries the present state of affairs. It offers no answers, no solutions and a confused conclusion. (Why should it). But all in all it is a good film, a film worth seeing, a film that graphically portrays just what is wrong for certain sections of our community, though it also a film that does not tell us how we might consider changing that society.

If people start to think, or re-think, after seeing it and go on to act, then it will have succeeded. If masochistic liberals fill the aisles and come out with pained consciences and nothing else, it will have failed. If you need spurring to action or merely want to have the pleasure of having a problem you know exists and are fighting against, vividly stated go and see it. If you only want to sympathise with oppressed young blacks in a sick society, then go home and forget about it, stay away!

\*'sus' is a law enabling the police to stop people in the street, it is usually used to harass young blacks.

\*\*Rank Distribution is handling the film in Britain.

Stefano.



Blue, the main character, being chased by the police



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\*The North American Anarchist, October/November 1980. £0.25 (14p). You can subscribe to this via Freedom Bookshop if you wish for £4.50 per year (12 issues).  
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NORTH AMERICAN ANARCHIST. Vol. 1, No. 7, Oct/Nov. 25p. "The Newspaper Dedicated to Direct Action", also looks at Poland. Plus "Theological Ecology" and "Anarchism and Organisation."  
SOLIDARITY FOR SOCIAL REVOLUTION. No. 14, Oct/Nov. 25p. "The Left - Who Gives a Damn?" plus MASSIVE pull-out feature on, you've guessed, Poland.  
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NEWREALITY KQM IX, 1st issue, 45p. Available from Freedom Bookshop or direct from NRK, Box A, c/o 14, Southgate, Bradford, BD21 2DF for 45p + 10p postage.  
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## Big Red Error

THE Big Red Diary has become a left-wing institution since it began six years ago. It is in fact a little socialist diary, published by the Trotskyist Pluto Press, which normally contains some political material at the beginning, a political directory at the end, and a series of entries on some particular theme scattered through the year. It was a good idea, it is always well done, but it is always disappointing, and the 1981 edition (now available from the Freedom Bookshop at £2) is typical.

As usual, it is beautifully produced. The introductory section describes "Britain under the Tories" in detail, but strangely omits "defence", and ends with an attack on the Labour Party which most Trots supported at the last election and will support at the next one. This year's theme is "Utopias", and there are fifty-odd entries on various real and imaginary utopian ideas and experiments during the past two or three thousand years. A few libertarian items are included, mostly inaccurately as might be expected, and what is almost incredible is that there isn't a single reference to the English Peasants' Revolt, the first known utopian experiment in this country, whose 600th anniversary will be widely celebrated next year.

The directory is mostly as useful as usual, but its treatment of anarchist material is ridiculously out of date. Most of the organisations listed have ceased to exist or changed their addresses several years ago, and there is no reference at all to FREEDOM or the Freedom Press, though the Freedom Bookshop is at least included.

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